



# **WESTMINSTER TRAFFIC COMMISSION**

## **Minutes of the Regular Meeting**

### **City Council Chambers**

### **Tuesday - September 28, 2010**

#### **CALL TO ORDER**

A regular meeting of the Westminster Traffic Commission was called to order by Chairman Hamade on Tuesday, September 28, 2010, at 6:06 p.m. at the City Council Chambers, 8200 Westminster Boulevard, Westminster, California.

#### **SALUTE TO FLAG**

Sergeant Nye led the members of the audience in the Salute to the Flag.

#### **ROLL CALL**

**Commissioners Present:** Hamade, Fisher, Robbins and Cruz.

**Commissioners Absent:** Nguyen.

**Staff Present:** Adolfo Ozaeta, Civil Engineering Associate; Sergeant Nye, Westminster Police Department; and Veronica Johnson, Secretary.

#### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the Traffic Commission's regular meeting of August 31, 2010 were approved by Vice Chairman Fisher, seconded by Commissioner Cruz, with Commissioner Nguyen being absent and Commissioner Robbins abstaining (3-0-1).

#### **ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED**

The first item to be considered at this evening's meeting was T.C. 79-119, Request to install parking restrictions to the east of Blessed Sacrament School exit driveway on Main Street and Staff proposal to rescind parking restrictions to the west of Blessed Sacrament School exit driveway on Main Street.

#### **T.C. 79-119**

#### **Parking Restrictions**

Mr. Ozaeta directed attention to Exhibit A, an aerial photo illustrating the existing and proposed parking restrictions at the subject location. A written request was received by Ms. Chris Massey on behalf of Blessed Sacrament School to investigate sight visibility concerns as people are exiting the driveway on Main Street. They do not believe there is enough sight distance to safely maneuver turns from the driveway onto Main Street.

Staff performed a field survey and found that as vehicles are exiting the driveway on the east side, they are currently not allowed to make a left turn, they are unable to see oncoming vehicles making their right turn onto Main Street; their only legal maneuver.

#### **STAFF'S**

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

Staff's recommendation was for the Commission to approve the request for parking restrictions in the amount of 71 feet to the east from the driveway to the curb return at the intersection of Main and Hoover on behalf of Blessed Sacrament School and the 96 feet of parking restrictions be removed to the west of the driveway.

Parking is a commodity throughout the City as single family homes own more vehicles and the need for storing these vehicles on the streets has never been higher than it is today. Staff is very considerate when it comes to removing parking and only does so when it comes to safety and is a justifiable removal. The west side is currently restricted and vehicles coming out of the driveway do not necessarily need to have clear visibility to the west; therefore, Staff is also requesting the Commission to approve their proposal to rescind parking restrictions at this location to allow parking for the general public.

Chairman Hamade sees the justification of the 71 foot restriction; however, questioned if the removal of the 96 feet included the playground, if so, would there be clear vision to the playground for safety reasons.

Commissioner Robbins stated that the area is fenced off and would recommend a 5 foot reduction on the west side of the driveway to reduce vehicle clutter.

Sergeant Nye explained that he has not observed kids playing up against the fence and it is fairly high. At this time, there are no parking restrictions across the street either, regardless whether the curb is white or red, predators could park there.

Chris Massey, 13221 Nevada Street, spoke in favor of installing 71 feet of parking restrictions as there is parking across the street. She would like to keep the 96 feet because of child safety to ward off child predators.

Thomas Dam, 8311 20<sup>th</sup> Street, spoke in favor of installing 71 feet of parking restrictions and understands parking is a commodity due to the limited parking on Olive Street. He

also recommended parking restrictions during school hours from 7 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Discussion ensued among the Commission, staff and public for clarification of school operating hours during the weekdays, weekends, recess and after school program.

Commissioner Robbins questioned the legality of signage.

Mr. Ozaeta informed the Commission that restricted parking was installed on Humboldt Street due to the congestion at the intersection of Edwards and Humboldt. They decided to open up the intersection so that children crossing freely could be identified by drivers. The signage at this location is no parking during morning and afternoon drop-off hours.

Mr. Ozaeta stated the Commission could extend the motion to include in addition to rescinding the parking restrictions to install timed parking restrictions between the hours of 7 a.m. - 3 p.m. from Monday through Friday.

**1<sup>st</sup> MOTION**

Chairman Hamade moved to approve the first half of staff's recommendation to install the parking restrictions at the east of Blessed Sacrament School for 71 feet; seconded by Vice Chairman Fisher.

**VOTE**

The motion was carried by a 4-0 vote.

**2<sup>nd</sup> MOTION**

Commissioner Robbins motioned to rescind the parking restrictions west of the driveway for 111 feet and install timed parking restrictions Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. - 3 p.m.; seconded by Chairman Hamade.

**VOTE**

The motion was carried by a 4-0 vote.

**T.C. 69-243**

**Olive & Plaza Street**

The second item for discussion was T.C. 69-243, Request to install marked crosswalks at the intersection of Olive Street and Plaza Street.

Mr. Ozaeta directed attention to Exhibit A to illustrate the locations of the proposed crosswalks. Chairman Hamade requested staff to perform an assessment of pedestrian safety on behalf of concerned residents in the area. Blessed Sacrament School had proposed this request in the past and the request was denied by the Traffic Committee for not being prudent at that time.

Staff's conducted a speed analysis for the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile that the general public was driving on Olive Street. It revealed 34 mph, which is 9mph over the posted 25 mph speed limit. The 85<sup>th</sup> percentile along Plaza Street surveyed at 25 mph, the posted speed limit.

In the past, a police radar trailer had been installed for motorists to view how fast they were traveling. Staff performed a site inventory and inspection and found that all signs and roadway marking were in good condition, refreshed, and compliant to the California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (California MUTCD).

Eleven accidents had been reported since 2005 and the primary collision factors were unsafe speed and pedestrian right of way violations.

The Traffic Engineering Division can assist with raising awareness for the surrounding organizations, including the Community Services Department, churches, and Sigler Park.

Mr. Ozaeta informed the Commission of a national traffic study conducted on "When is a crosswalk unsafe?" and the answer is when it is marked. Studies disclose that once a crosswalk is painted on the street, the number of injuries in the marked area will double. Reason being, pedestrians have a false sense of security when they enter a marked crosswalk. Crosswalks installed at an uncontrolled location result in jeopardizing pedestrian safety.

Sergeant Nye elaborated on staff's assessment in the area and agreed with their analysis. He further explained that due to the width of the street, motorists feel that they can drive at a higher rate of speed, approximately 10 miles over the speed limit. This makes it harder for the motorists to stop to avoid a pedestrian in the roadway especially in a marked crosswalk. Pedestrians have a false sense of security and tend to feel a sense of ownership of the road once they enter that walkway. Right of way violations can be committed by cars and pedestrians. Many of the accidents resulted in pedestrian's violating the right of way of the cars in the roadway. Pedestrian's must yield to traffic that is close enough to constitute a hazard approaching rather than entering at an inappropriate time. Regarding the proposed crosswalks, he stated that the majority of the people who park their cars to attend the church most likely will not utilize the crosswalk due to where the front entrance of the church is located; therefore,

pedestrians will still cross in unmarked areas. The only crosswalk he would consider is across Olive Street.

Commissioner Cruz questioned jaywalking and Sergeant Nye explained that jaywalking is crossing between two signal controlled intersections.

Chairman Hamade questioned flashing crosswalks and if they were solar. Mr. Ozaeta explained that the technology is not there to build a flashing system in the ground; they are not reliable and do not function regularly. Flashing beacons are solar generated and are intended for use at school crossings.

Chairman Hamade commented that 10,000 people attend the church and that should warrant a flashing beacon.

Commissioner Robbins stated that Sergeant Nye made a good point and added that people cross anywhere; therefore, unmarked crosswalks will force people to look for traffic before crossing.

Mr. Ozaeta added that the Long Beach and San Diego study analyzed over 400 intersections over a five year period and determined that the accident ratio of marked crosswalks was twice as high. Those traffic commissions chose to throw these out and only consider school crossings. Qualifications need to be met; otherwise all intersections would be open for installation at \$20,000.00 per unit. He further elaborated that the new beacons proposed for the Safe Routes to School funding must be justified by the state and federal level.

Chairman Hamade and Commissioner Robbins agreed with potentially placing an East/West crossing but not the North/South crossing.

Vice Chairman Fisher was concerned with the backup of traffic and the crosswalk being too close to the signal as cars are traveling at a high speed coming around the corner from Western.

Mr. Ozaeta explained that if the Commission allowed for one crossing, a no pedestrian crossing sign would need to be placed at the other proposed crossing to be effective and enforceable.

Commissioner Robbins explained that he was not in favor of the crosswalks for the reason that children may run

across a marked walkway unsafely opposed to the streets being unmarked and parents can look for traffic while holding onto their children. People will continue to cross anywhere.

Hao Nguyen, 14146 S. Olive Street, spoke in favor of installation of crosswalks due to the numerous activities with the Spanish and Vietnamese communities that take place at the church and Sigler Park on the weekends. He suggested a midblock crossing on Olive Street in front of the church.

Gene Senger, 15351 Vassar Street, spoke in favor of installation of crosswalks because this intersection is a 3-way intersection and markings will bring people together to cross. There is not enough parking to accommodate everyone; therefore people park and cross anywhere. There are probably more people that cross back and forth at the church opposed to the school.

Lawrence Flesch, 13862 Ida Way, spoke in favor of installation of crosswalks because the traffic on both sides of the street is chaotic. He believes that some type of control should be taken before someone gets hurt.

Thomas Dan, 8311 20<sup>th</sup> Street, spoke in favor of installation of crosswalks because 11 masses take place during the weekend and 9-11 thousand people attend, not including the other classes taking place. They come before the Commission for guidance because the people are confused and cross everywhere. A crosswalk would help concentrate people and cars cannot drive through 1,100 people at once.

Commissioner Cruz asked if the Church could have crossing guards and Mr. Ozaeta explained that the Church would have to make the arrangements due to liability issues. Crossing guards are for the safety of the children and not recommended for the adults.

Chairman Hamade inquired if there were any other solutions and Mr. Ozaeta explained that there are two issues the City has; one is aggressive drivers and the Police Department strives to slow them down by increased enforcement and speed trailers; secondly, misunderstandings of pedestrian right of way. The Schools, Church and community need to be educated that when you cross the street, you must be responsible for your own safety. Crosswalks are for intersections and

midblock crosswalks are not recommended at all and eliminated throughout the County and Country.

Sergeant Nye explained that when 1,100 people are exiting the church, it is hard to conduct enforcement. In order for the installation of a crosswalk to be effective, you would need to restrict crossing anywhere else. Signs would need to be posted to not cross at other locations and use the crosswalk, otherwise they would be in violation.

Vice Chairman Fisher believes education would be most effective.

Mr. Ozaeta attended a PTA meeting a few years ago, prior to the installation of a new traffic signal at Edwards and Trask. They educated the students, teachers and community of the crosswalks. This was very successful and the school was happy with it.

**STAFF'S**

**RECOMMENDATION** Staff's Recommendation was to deny the request for the installation of marked crosswalks at the intersection of Olive Street and Plaza Street.

**MOTION**

Vice Chairman Fisher moved to approve staff's recommendation, seconded Commissioner Robbins.

**VOTE**

The motion was carried by a 3-0-1 vote with Chairman Hamade abstaining.

Residents in attendance were informed of the appeal process.

**T.C. 10-105**

**Westminster Blvd.**

The third item for discussion was T.C. 10-105, Request for removal of raised median on Westminster Boulevard between Arizona Street and Webber Place and installation of a crosswalk.

Mr. Ozaeta informed the Commission that this item was placed last on the agenda to allow for people to arrive at the meeting since it generated much interest.

Mr. Ozaeta explained that he would not focus too much on crosswalk safety as they had just reviewed a similar item. A crosswalk at an uncontrolled intersection was not going to be considered due to the safety implications on that type of roadway. The focus will be on the main concern which is



the impact the business owners felt that the median segment is having on business.

Mr. Ozaeta gave some background on the installation of the median segment. The median segment prevents vehicles making a left turn into the business establishment. The medians were built with funding applied for by the City. The installation of medians have reduced accidents, beautified the City, it is a nationally recognized traffic calming strategy, eliminating head on collisions and reduce speed on the roadways. Medians reduce the total are reduced by 55%. The median installation on Bolsa Avenue reduced traffic collisions by 42%. By eliminating a variety of maneuvers, you are making the roadway safer.

Residents and business owners are always concerned when funding is approved for median projects because everyone wants an opening at every driveway. One of the most difficult things is to determine how the traffic flows, there are counters that are placed, traffic is observed, and major access routes are focused on the north south direction. After studies have been done on commercial establishments before and after the median installation and they reveal that there is not a negative impact, it in fact increases the property value along these thoroughfares. Contrary to what the studies show, the applicant feels the median is negatively impacting their business.

Mr. Ozaeta reminded the Commission that whenever a decision is made, we have to make sure that we are going to be able to be fair to the next applicant; there are 20 locations along the Westminster medians in which commercial establishments, roughly the size of this one, are not allowed left turns into their establishments. If this expensive removal is approved, how do we tell the next applicant no.

#### **STAFF'S**

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

Staff's recommendation is to consider the request for the removal of the raised median segment on Westminster Boulevard between Arizona Street and Webber Place.

The following people spoke in favor of the removal of the median segment:

Wayne, 7695 Westminster, agrees that the medians beautify the City. There is not a left turn allowed going eastbound until Pacific, west of Beach, u-turns are not even allowed at Beach Boulevard. He feels that removing



this median would not only help this business center but also traffic flow. He also stated that vehicles turn right into Webber and cross all the way across Westminster, what he considers a hazard. Tenants have also left the center due to slow down of traffic and the inconvenience to customers.

Louis Strothman, 7652 Wyoming Street, stated that it was dangerous to try to pull out and try to make a left turn out of the side street to go east on Westminster. The traffic backs up on the side street.

Theresa Kasprzyk, 13861 Jasperson Way, stated she sees the problem with taking the median out, but would like to see the opening at Jasperson Way.

Marcel Doumerc, 13411 Olympus Drive, explained to the Commission that this particular shopping center does not have any other access, off of the side street for example. He has seen vehicles cars stop in the middle of the road to make a left turn, making it a safety issue. He also sees a lot of pedestrian traffic crossing this segment. Left turn access is fairly far from the businesses. He stated that the medians do look great, but in the case, it is not a good design.

Leon Shu Yau property owner, has received complaints from customers going into the shopping center because there is no left turn allowed into the center. Tenants have complained that they are losing business. Mr. Yau is also in favor of a pedestrian crosswalk because there are many people coming from the Lexus service center and the apartment complexes across the street.

Charles, tenant, believes the median has to be put in the right location for safety and in this location it is creating a hazard for the public. People are turning left where they are not supposed to or making unsafe u-turns to come into the center. He considers the design of the median to be a design defect. The median should be modified to allow left turns into the center or the residential street.

Chairman Hamade stated that he was not in favor of the crosswalk. He does believe that there is justification for the removal of the median, for the business owners, neighbors, and safety. Chairman Hamade stated he had driven Westminster Boulevard and noted how other centers were, this location is the worst one. There is no entry off of Arizona, had to make a u-turn to get in. It does effect the businesses located in the center.

Vice Chairman Fisher questioned the distance between traffic signals. Mr. Ozaeta confirmed that it was about half a mile between them. She suggested people drive to a signal and make a safe u-turn.

Discussion ensued among the Commission regarding unsafe maneuvers being executed and how the area was like before the installation of the median.

Commissioner Robbins commented that the removal of the median would create other problems for the Lexus service center, increase the likelihood for head on collisions, and increase the cut-through traffic in the business center for Jaspersen. He further commented that removing the median would be expensive. Mr. Ozaeta confirmed that it may be well over \$100,000. Commissioner Robbins also stated that he always sees the parking lot near capacity, which seems like business is good. He understands the frustration, but cannot justify the removal.

Commissioner Cruz stated that he did not support the removal of the median and questioned the existing pocket. Mr. Ozaeta explained that the reason the pocket is placed to allow a left turn on Webber is because school buses make that left to go to the bus storage facility, which is why it took priority. Two curves cannot be placed on this median because of the design standards.

Discussion continued over the cost of the removal of the median

#### **MOTION**

Commissioner Cruz moved to deny the removal of the raised median on Westminster Boulevard between Arizona Street and Webber Place, seconded by Vice Chairman Fisher.

Ms. Johnson informed the Commission and those in attendance of the appeal process.

#### **VOTE**

The motion was carried by a 4-0 vote

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

Ms. Johnson presented service pins to Chairman Hamade, Vice Chairman Fisher, Commissioner Cruz, and Commissioner Robbins.

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

There were no "Old Business" items presented to the Commission at tonight's meeting.

#### **INFORMATION**

**AND REPORTS**

There were no "Information and Reports" items presented to the Commission at tonight's meeting.

**ORAL**

**COMMUNICATIONS**

There were no "Oral Communications" items presented to the Commission at tonight's meeting.

**WRITTEN**

**COMMUNICATIONS**

There were no "Written Communications" items presented to the Commission at tonight's meeting.

**ITEMS**

**COMMISSIONERS**

**MAY WISH TO**

**DISCUSS**

There were no "Items Commissioner may wish to Discuss" items presented to the Commission at tonight's meeting.

**ITEMS STAFF MAY**

**WISH TO DISCUSS**

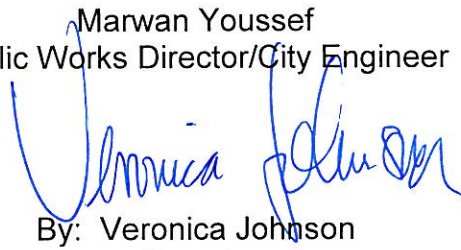
Mr. Ozaeta informed the Commission that the speed survey was taken to Council. Everything was adopted minus the increase to 50 miles per hour on Bolsa Chica between Westminster Blvd and Garden Grove Blvd. Staff was asked to resurvey the segment. The resurveyed segment will be on the next Council agenda.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Commission at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marwan Youssef  
Public Works Director/City Engineer



By: Veronica Johnson  
Secretary